

called out "Mine!" ("khong chan" [female speaking] or "phom" [male speaking]). Never did a parent say "ours!"⁴⁴ Sometimes the mother might ask a relative or friend present to claim the child, and so become a godparent.

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As the first human step to control the volatile khwan, the first objective of winnowing a baby was to seize it (kan rap khwan) and so "complete" the child's person.⁴⁵ By tying holy thread at the wrist and ankle soul-exits, the khwan which had flitted in and out of the womb was given root. It was still flighty, but now it had a life-long home.

Secondly, the child was given membership in a human family. Connection through blood and semen did not establish kinship. At first, the child hovered between corporeal and non-corporeal existence. "The child is not fully human for the first 3 days." This period was under the supernatural control of Mother Su, for babies "never died during the first 3 days after birth. They might be born dead or they died 6 or 7 days later." The shock of dropping the child on the tray "made him forget his life as a spirit." When someone cried "mine!" the child finally cut his relationship with the spirit-world. As an old woman explained, "The ties are the important part [of the ceremony]. They show that the child belongs to someone. Once a tie fell off one wrist. The child cried and cried until it was restored," fearing its lost khwan would attach itself elsewhere. The claiming set up kinship as a contract before witnesses. Whoever announced responsibility for the child's care, and this was usually the mother, deserved reciprocal care in old age. Other relatives would also help to bring him through to maturity. He would not be so frightened of an evil spirit because of family support, nor of the "ghost of an ancestor" who would be recognized as a relative.

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Third, the ceremony strengthened the child. By giving him through the ties a stable khwan, he "grew better, cried less, and did not get sick."

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The incorporation of as many auspicious elements as possible into the ritual was customary. Since the child took

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⁴⁴. A winnowing tray (basket) had the capacity to "trap" spirits. It could seize or trap not only the khwan soul, but, at New Year's, one of the fun ghosts (Textor:371).

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⁴⁵. There is no convenient way of expressing "ours" in Thai in this restricted sense (id.).

27] contaminated drinking water, but the traditional use of boiled water for newborn infants and their mothers, and its occasional use for sick persons, might provide the starting point for a desirable change.

Meal Preparation and Service

Processes and Equipment

252 The principal processes involved in food preparation for which equipment was required are: cutting solid food into bite-size pieces, pounding spices and flavoring materials, grating coconut, straining, boiling, sauteing in a small amount of fat, steaming, and roasting on a stick or metal support over the fire. Although foods were steamed or roasted only occasionally, the processes were familiar to all.

354 The Thai kitchen had no oven. When the term "baked" was used, it might mean cooking with dry heat on a rack over the fire (as banana baked in the skin) or without fat in the frying pan (as small dried fish toasted in this way).

128 Equipment used during meal preparation by the 11 families observed on 44 survey days is listed in Appendix A, p. 96, that used in serving and eating food, on p. 96.

252 The type of food preparation and service was much the same in the relatively well-to-do and the poorer households in Bang Chan. The chief difference in equipment for food preparation and service in families of different economic status was in the number of items of one kind which were owned. Thus a poor family might own one knife and one clay water jar, whereas an affluent family would probably own several knives and a number of water jars. Equipment used on special occasions, as in preparation of food for large numbers of people, was owned by well-to-do families only. Some had enough equipment for large cooperative work parties.

Persons Responsible for Food Preparation

252 Food was usually prepared by the homemaker and/or older daughter, if one were at home, but all members of the family who were old enough to help, had some knowledge of food preparation and did prepare food as the occasion demanded. While preparing, cooking and serving food were more frequently carried out by women than by men, adults and school-age children of both sexes had some competence in this area. "While certain activities are normally assigned to men and others to women, the Thai maintain no rigid compartmentalization and are unembarrassed when a woman does a man's job or a man does

APPENDIX A

Description of the Kitchen and Some Notes on Food
Preparation in a Relatively Prosperous Household¹

Friday, May 22, 1953

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Arrived at 5:15 a.m. When we reached the house, the mother was holding the dog. The house was dark, and we walked around sleeping babies and children. . . . The 15 year old niece who prepares meals here, was already at work. For light she had an oil lamp, a tin of about 1 pt. capacity, with wick. The rice was already measured, but she waited until SS could weigh it, before putting it on to cook. SS used her flashlight to see the scale and her notebook.

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The kitchen here has a thatched roof, well smoked, but the walls and "windows" are of woven split bamboo. A sliding wooden "window" can be pushed back to allow access to a broad shelf outside. Here a large pan of pond water is kept, so that dishes may be rinsed and hands rinsed after each operation. Dishes are stacked upside down, on a wooden rack nearby, to dry.

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The stove area in the corner has place for one fire, but several places for pots to stand. Downstairs, under the shed near the fish pond, is a larger clay stove, where the niece cooks the rice in the morning (enough for noon as well) and some other items; for example the (3)khii-(2)leg leaves which were cooked last night for use in sour curry this a.m. This probably keeps the kitchen cooler than it would otherwise be. Waste, fish bones, vegetable parings, etc., which are to be given to the chickens, can be thrown below through the space between two floor levels (kitchen and main rooms).

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Rice water, coconut water, and food left in the serving bowls when the meal is over, are given to the dogs. A bowl is kept below, near where rice is drained, for dog food. Food left in pots is kept for humans to eat.

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Fish caught in the pond are kept alive in pond water, in a water jar. When a fish is wanted, the niece catches one from the jar, stuns it with the back of her knife, and scales and cleans it on a split log nearby (rounded side of log up). The fish is put into a small basket, and the niece

1. In reproducing these notes, slight changes have been made such as substitution of descriptive terms for personal names which appeared in the original.

Equipment Used For Food Preparation

252 Equipment used for food preparation by 11 families participating in the dietary study: clay stove; pots and covers [25] of clay, light weight aluminum, and enameled iron; frying pans, curved, of sheet iron, with home-made wooden handle on one side, or metal handles on opposite sides (shallow clay pans were also used for frying); basins, pails, chopping boards; grater for coconut: a metal, toothed instrument mounted on one end of a low wooden stool (often called a "wooden rabbit" because the seat of the stool might be shaped like a rabbit); mortar of pottery or stone; wooden pestle; fiber strainers usually with rigid handles, to hold them in place on top of a pot; a large-bladed all-purpose knife; in some households, one or more smaller knives; metal turner, with home-made wooden handle; spoons, with bowls of coconut shell, gourd or wood; tin cans for dipping, measuring rice, etc.; fiber trays used for winnowing rice, for drying food, storing dried chilies, onions, etc.; metal tray for serving food to priests, and for household use; baskets for storing food; (5)faa-(1)chii, or fiber cover, to keep flies and insects off cooked food; large earthenware water jars.

[84] Other items less often used, and owned by relatively few families in Bang Chan, included: steamer; a perforated clay pot or metal pan with cover, designed to fit tightly into another pot in which water was boiled; large wooden mortar, made of a hollowed tree trunk; spring-type egg beater (a strong spiral spring attached to a stick); scale; glass water jars.

Equipment Used in Serving Food and Eating

264 The equipment for serving and eating food might include:
412 flat bottomed bowls with a deep edge, similar to Western-
415 style soup plates, used as individual rice bowls; plates;
small bowls for "with-rice" dishes; sauce dishes with stand, for chili sauce; enameled iron or china spoons (Chinese type) used for serving moist foods; forks, used by some families on special occasions; teapot and cups; large rice bowl for ceremonial use (silver or aluminum); large brass spoon with serpent-tail handle, for serving rice; drinking glasses; tiered lunch pail; canteen; thermos bottle.

1. A relatively poor family (Sharp et al. 1953, p. 223) had one pair of fork and spoon for eating.

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There was one item of parental gifts which is not shown in Table 2 -- the household equipment. Two of the

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63 families reported that they received a complete set of kitchen utensils, and two included jars in their gift lists. After checking the result of this survey with some informants, however, many admitted that they did not include these kitchen utensils in the list because they were obvious items. Nevertheless, there was no basis on which it could be inferred that every newly established family received a set of the kitchen utensils. It was therefore decided to omit the household equipment from the table.

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Another form of parental gifts was the practice, if the parents had enough land to spare, of letting the couple work on some ten or twenty rai free of charge for the first two years. Rent might be charged after that, but there were also cases in which the couples continue to work on the parcel without paying any rent to their parents and finally took it for granted that the parcels belonged to them.

Economic Significance of the Family

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Much space has been devoted to discussion of the family because of its significant role as the only organized producing unit in the village economy. Another important function of the family was mentioned in previous sections -- through privileges extended to the majority of newly wed couples during the nascent period, the old family facilitated